

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 2005-271-C - ORDER NO. 2005-654
NOVEMBER 9, 2005

IN RE: Application of the Office of Regulatory Staff) ORDER
for a Waiver of Qualifications for the) ADOPTING
Lifeline/Linkup Programs for Victims of) PROCEDURES
Hurricane Katrina Pending Action by the)
Federal Communications Commission.)

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on certain Guidelines and Procedures proposed by the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) as the result of our directives in Order No. 2005-520. In that Order, we noted that any individuals displaced by Hurricane Katrina who relocate to South Carolina from the Gulf Coast for a long-term period will likely seek permanent housing and residential telephone service and that such individuals may require assistance from the Lifeline/Linkup program not available under current criteria. We then directed ORS, if the Federal Communications Commission expanded the program, to work with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), the SC Department of Social Services (DSS) and other state and federal agencies to ensure the purpose behind these programs is being met and that the appropriate persons are receiving aid, and to prepare appropriate guidelines for waivers of and relaxation of the eligibility requirements for the Lifeline and Linkup programs.

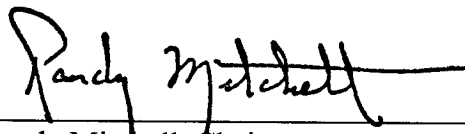
Pursuant to this directive, ORS met with members representing the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Social Services, the Office of Research and Statistics, the Columbia Housing Authority, the Emergency Management Division,

and the South Carolina Telephone Association to discuss proposed waivers to those persons displaced by Hurricane Katrina. ORS then made recommendations in a letter dated September 29, 2005, which is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

We have examined those proposals, found them reasonable, and we hereby adopt the recommendations as filed. Clearly, a relaxation of the original criteria for Hurricane Katrina victims is in the public interest, considering the devastating effects of that hurricane. The notification procedures and verification and certification procedures are all reasonable, as is the proposed procedure to obtain assistance from the program. We agree with ORS when it states that these procedures will allow victims of Hurricane Katrina to receive the necessary assistance in a non-discriminatory manner and will provide proper measures to ensure that the funds are spent appropriately. Again, the recommendations are adopted as filed.

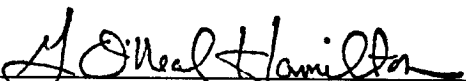
This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



Randy Mitchell, Chairman

ATTEST:



G. O'Neal Hamilton, Vice-Chairman

(SEAL)

Docket No. 2005-271-C

Order No. 2005-654

November 9, 2005

C. DUKES SCOTT
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September 29, 2005

Mr. Charles L. A. Terreni, Esquire
Chief Clerk/Administrator
Public Service Commission of South Carolina
P.O. Drawer 11649
Columbia, SC 29211

Re: DOCKET NO. 2005-271-C – Application of the Office of Regulatory Staff for a Waiver of Qualifications for the Lifeline/Linkup Programs for Victims of Hurricane Katrina Pending Action By the Federal Communications Commission.

Dear Mr. Terreni:

This letter is in regards to the request filed by the Office of Regulatory Staff in the above referenced docket in which we requested a conditional waiver of certain qualifications of the Lifeline/Linkup Programs for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. On September 15, 2005, the Commission issued a directive requesting that ORS “work with FEMA, DHHS, the telecommunications industry and other appropriate agencies to develop waivers and relaxed eligibility standards as appropriate to the current emergency.”

Pursuant to this request, ORS has met with members representing the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Social Services, the Office of Research and Statistics, the Columbia Housing Authority, the Emergency Management Division, and the South Carolina Telephone Association to discuss the waivers to be granted to those persons displaced by Hurricane Katrina. As a result of such discussions, the Office of Regulatory Staff’s recommendations are as follows:

1. Notification Procedures

In order to ensure that the persons eligible to receive benefits from Lifeline and Link-up as a result of Hurricane Katrina are properly notified, the ORS will:

- a. issue a press release announcing the availability of the program;
- b. provide posters and brochures to the Department of Social Services, SC Cares, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Columbia Housing Authority as

well as other entities offering assistance to those persons displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

2. Verification and Certification Procedures:

For the verification and certification of potential recipients, ORS will accept, at a minimum, the following forms of documentation:

- a. Evidence of FEMA assistance for Hurricane Katrina;
- b. SC Cares card;
- c. Evidence of American Red Cross Assistance for Hurricane Katrina;
- d. Evidence of Salvation Army Assistance for Hurricane Katrina;
- e. Drivers License from affected area;
- f. Any Proof of residence from affected area.

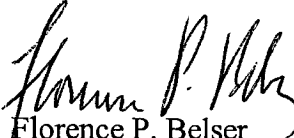
The procedure to obtain assistance from the program is applicable to all local exchange companies and is as follows:

- a. The potential recipient will receive notification of Lifeline/Linkup availability through one or more of the means outlined previously;
- b. The applicant will contact ORS and provide the proper identification;
- c. The applicant will contact the appropriate LEC and request telephone service;
- d. The Office of Regulatory Staff Lifeline Intake Manager will send the certified request to the LEC for the Lifeline/Linkup credit to be issued;
- e. Lifeline assistance for victims of Katrina shall not exceed six months from the date of the processed application;
- f. ORS will submit names of qualifying applicants to the Budget and Control Board's Office of Research and Statistical Services ("ORSS"). ORSS will add the names of the qualified individuals to their existing lists of verified recipients of Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and Food Stamps. ORSS will indicate the six month eligibility timeframe for these participants in their database. Participants will automatically be deleted from the Lifeline/Linkup recipient data base at the completion of the six month period. Local Exchange Carriers will match their Lifeline/Link-up lists against the ORSS database just as they are currently doing.

ORS believes that the above procedures will allow victims of Hurricane Katrina to receive the necessary assistance in a non-discriminatory manner and will provide proper measures to ensure the funds are spent appropriately. Accordingly, ORS recommends that the Commission adopt the guidelines and procedures as set out above.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Please let me know if you have any questions or if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Florence P. Belser
General Counsel